

LUDLOW COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

May 28, 2026

Mayor Sarah Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Laurie Sparks called the roll, which showed the following council members present: Steve Chapman, Meagan Guthrie, David Ziegler, and Paula Graszus. Julie Terry Navarre and Abigail Miller were absent.

ALSO ATTENDING: City Attorney Michelle Eviston, City Attorney Zach Smith, City Clerk Laurie Sparks, Steve Bodde

Council approved Councilmember Abigail Miller's absence from the regular meeting on May 14, 2026.

Motion by Mr. Chapman, seconded by Mr. Ziegler, to approve the minutes from the council meeting on May 14, 2026. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Chad Finni, 517 Linden Street, inquired why council continues to allow Ms. Miller to miss council meetings. Following discussion, Ms. Eviston advised that council could have a removal hearing. The City would have to hire someone to prosecute, and it could take four to eight weeks to schedule. A unanimous vote would be required to remove Ms. Miller from office. Mayor Thompson advised that she would reach out to Ms. Miller to explain her options. Discussion on Ms. Miller's multiple absences will be on the next meeting agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolution 2026-6

Ms. Eviston read **Resolution 2026-6 A Resolution of the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, Approving the Mayor's Appointment of Christopher H. Courtney to the Position of City Administrative Officer in the City of Ludlow, Kentucky.** **Motion by Mr. Ziegler to approve Resolution 2026-6.** Mr. Ziegler recommended that everyone put their differences aside and vote to approve Mayor Thompson's appointment to the city administrator position. Mr. Chapman advised that he was in favor of hiring Mr. Courtney initially but now believes that the department heads are doing well and Mayor Thompson is doing a good job of managing the City. Mr. Chapman recommended that the City consider holding off on hiring a city administrator until the end of the year and reevaluate the need at that time. Mayor Thompson advised that she would like to put the issue to rest and requested a vote on the resolution. Mayor Thompson's husband, Aaron, expressed concerns about Mayor Thompson taking on the administrative work and stated that an administrator is needed especially for economic development. Following a discussion about council members offering assistance, Ms. Eviston advised that council must act as a whole and that limits what they can do day-to-day. **Mr. Chapman seconded the motion to approve Resolution 2026-6. Following a roll call vote, motion failed: one aye (Mr. Ziegler), three nays (Mr. Chapman, Ms. Guthrie, Ms. Graszus).**

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Mr. Chapman discussed the information he prepared about the estimated revenue that the City could collect from various property taxes rates. The property values were reassessed in 2026, which resulted in an approximate \$33,000,000 increase in the overall value of properties in the city. Mayor Thompson advised that council would review the tax rates later in the year and encouraged council to consider tasking the compensating rate plus 4% to cover the increased needs of the police and fire departments. Former City Treasurer Steve Bodde was hired on a contract basis to assist in preparation of the budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. Mayor Thompson discussed a list of several budgeted items, including adding several employees, police and fire department improvements, road repairs, city building roof replacement, street light repairs in the business district, park improvements, and community events. Discussion on the possibility of upgrading the cameras in Ludlow Memorial Park and the benefits and concerns about using cameras that could be accessed remotely. Mayor Thompson will provide a supplemental budget document, but it will not be as detailed as the amended budget that was passed in December 2025. Discussion on considering financing the purchase of a new fire truck over a ten-to-twenty-year term. Discussion on the expected revenue collection from property taxes. The budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the pay plan will need to be amended by the end of June. Following further discussion on the park cameras, council agreed to budget up to \$8,000.00 and discuss with Chief Beck which cameras would be most useful for the police.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Chapman wanted to acknowledge a couple that walks around the city picking up trash and let them know they are doing a great job.
- Ms. Guthrie advised that two businesses contacted her about the City's ABC fee structure and noted that it was higher than other cities, like Covington. Ms. Guthrie advised that she would like to consider amending the fee structure to be more competitive with other cities. Ms. Eviston suggested placing a discussion on the ABC fee structure on the next meeting agenda. Ms. Guthrie attended the recent Municipal Government League meeting where the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD) released their comprehensive economic development survey as part of a five-year strategic plan. The NKADD is asking residents to fill out the survey to help gather information for their economic development needs. Ms. Guthrie congratulated Chief Steward on a great fire department intern graduation ceremony.
- Mr. Ziegler discussed the issues with e-scooters and e-bikes and would like to see an ordinance restricting them. Mayor Thompson advised that the City of Ft. Thomas is in the process of passing an ordinance addressing the issue. If the ordinance passes, the City could look at it and determine if the restrictions should be applied city-wide. Mr. Ziegler announced that the first Hot Dogs in the Park will be on June 12, 2026. Donations are still being accepted for the event.
- Ms. Graszus thanked everyone who participated in or came out to watch the Memorial Day Parade. Ms. Graszus thanked the couple who cleans up trash around the city for picking up candy that was left in the street from the parade. The Fireworks Festival will be on June 27, 2026. Ms. Graszus gave a shout out to Public Works for getting Hollingsworth Field ready after all the rain and advised that they were able to play a game that evening.

Mayor Thompson announced that the River Stage opening will be on Saturday, June 6, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. with a concert by Dublin Defense. There will be food and beer trucks on-site. Mayor Thompson announced that Ludlow in Bloom would be meeting at Ludlow Memorial Park to

clean up and mulch the flower beds and mulch around the trees. Anyone who would like to help should meet at Ludlow Memorial Park at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 30, 2026.

At Ms. Eviston's request, motion by Mr. Chapman, seconded by Ms. Guthrie, to table the executive session pursuant to KRS 61.810(1)(c) regarding pending and potential litigation involving the City until the next council meeting. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. Motion carried: all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Sparks, City Clerk

Attest: _____
Sarah Thompson, Mayor